



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ prepares for potential Red River, Mississippi River and Atchafalaya River flooding

BATON ROUGE – In response to the heavy rainfall that occurred over the past month, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has prepared for rising water levels along the Red River, Mississippi River and Atchafalaya River throughout the state.

DEQ has been assessing and monitoring river stages, and emergency response teams are on standby. DEQ's regional offices are ready for possible response efforts concerning spills, sheens or releases.

DEQ has been in communication with EPA Region 6 as well as the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Parish Emergency Operations offices and the Louisiana State Police about emergency preparedness, environmental assessment and response.

Response operations will be similar to the plan undertaken during the 2011 Mississippi River flooding. During that event, DEQ collaborated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other local, state, federal and non-governmental partners to assess and monitor water quality throughout the event. In the event the Bonnet Carre and/or Morganza Spillway are opened, DEQ will be available to assist with any water quality monitoring, environmental assessment and emergency response activities that may be necessary.

Residents and business owners should avoid any contact with chemicals, pollution, hazardous materials or loose containers in and around floodwater areas. Reports on any oil spills or chemical releases should be made to the National Response Center at 800-424-8802 or the DEQ hotline at 225-219-3640 or 888-763-5424. If it is an emergency, call 911.

For more information on the current river flood outlook, visit: <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/lmr/c/>.

For information on how to plan and prepare for weather-related events, visit: <http://getagameplan.org/>.